

EXHIBIT

DATE

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1/20/11

HB

151

PLAINTIFFS IN THE CONSOLIDATED WOLF CASE

DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

SIERRA CLUB

HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

JACKSON HOLE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

ALLIANCE FOR THE WILD ROCKIES

OREGON WILD

CASCADIA WILDLANDS

WESTERN WATERSHEDS PROJECT

WILDLANDS NETWORK

HELLS CANYON PRESERVATION COUNCIL

GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION

1/192011

I am writing this in order to show my opposition to HB #228 introduced by M. Rosendale. If passed this House Bill would eliminate the age limit to purchase a big game license. In my opinion, as well my experience this would be a poor direction for us to move for a variety of reasons.

Over the years I've worked with a number of youth teaching them gun safety and gun handling and while I've found I can teach them to shoot and in some cases quite well to longer distances. I also feel that they don't have the mental capacity to make good decisions while in the field and under the excitement and stress of being in the presence of big game.

Point being that while they can hit a target such as a gong at the range under controlled situations (IE. Bench rest, no hurry, no one yelling shoot shoot and so on) I feel that it would be a tiny number of youth sub 12 years in age that could keep it all together while in the field and make good decisions prior to squeezing the trigger.

My early years found me shooting earlier than most as a result of growing up in a family where my Parents, Uncles as well both my Grand Dads all shot and hunted a lot. So I was blessed with wonderful mentors and excellent training that unfortunately most youth do not receive. With all that I do not feel it would have been a good idea to turn me loose with a deer rifle and a license at an age younger than 12.

What troubles me is that most youth do not receive the kind of hands on training that I did. Too many youth would do some shooting but not enough to be prepared to handle what they'll be dealt with in the field. There are simply not enough caring mentors out there that will take the time to teach our youth in a manner that in the perfect world there should be.

In the field we have to take a look at conditions, find a good rest, decide whether or not the animal is close enough to take a shot and know when it looks good thru the scope and shoot and when to back off the trigger and say this doesn't look good. Many times this is done with a short amount of time and our decision to shoot or not shoot has to come quickly. And it's my opinion that while we're taking the life of an animal we need to do all that we can to ensure a quick clean kill.

As far as a youth being able to pass the Firearms safety class/test I feel that many could pass the written and range exams. However I do feel that while they can pass the test they will not be mentally mature enough to make good decisions while in the field.

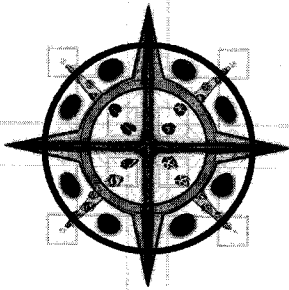
I strongly oppose most of the youth sub 12 years of age being able to have a big game license and being able to hunt big game at such a young age.

Mark R Dobrenski

915 Dimaggio 

Belgrade, Mt

Headwaters Fish and Game Assn. Board Member



GLOBAL WILDLIFE RESOURCES INC.

MARK R. JOHNSON DVM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 30, 2010

To: Montana Legislature's Environmental Quality Council

From: Mark Johnson DVM, Wildlife Veterinarian

Re: The presence of Echinococcus spp. in reintroduced wolves

I am a wildlife veterinarian and Founder and Executive Director of a non-profit organization, Global Wildlife Resources, Inc. While employed by the National Park Service in Yellowstone National Park, I was Project Veterinarian for the 1995-1996 Gray Wolf Reintroduction Program. After extensive consultations with many professionals, I developed and coordinated the veterinary aspects for reintroducing Canadian wolves into central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park.

I hereby testify that it is extremely unlikely that any reintroduced wolf from Canada could have carried Echinococcus spp. tapeworms into the U.S. Droncit (praziquantel) is a parasiticide which is 100% effective for removing tapeworms in dogs and other canids with a single treatment which can be administered orally or by injection. Every wolf was treated at least twice with Droncit injections before they were transported into the United States. For what it is worth, in addition to Droncit, every wolf was given Ivermectin and fenbendazole which also act against parasites.

I am not able to provide a hard copy of my publication, but the medications given to the reintroduced wolves is published as a case study in the book, Large Mammal Restoration.

Here is the citation:

Johnson, M.R. 2001. Case 2. Health Aspects of Gray Wolf Restoration in D.S. Maehr, R.F. Noss, and J.L. Larkin, eds. Large Mammal Restoration, Island Press, Washington. Pp.163-167.

If the Echinococcus tapeworm in wolves becomes such an important issue to the state of Montana, then what does the state propose to do about this disease (which is no worse than other zoonotic diseases)?

Here are some of the proposed courses of action against Echinococcus:

1. Reducing wolf numbers will not reduce the prevalence of the tapeworm which is carried by the ungulates and is not dependent on wolf densities. It is either here or not here.

2. Burning winter habitat is absolutely ineffective because no one can burn enough land nor would it decimate all of the eggs;. and the area will become "re-infected" as soon as it is re-used by wolves, coyotes, or foxes. Wolves are not getting infected from the "infected" land, they are getting infected from the ungulates. And people would not potentially get infected from a broad area of land. They would potentially get it from handling wolf feces and very rarely from their pets.

3. Orally treating wolf packs is absolutely ineffective and impractical. Will you treat every wolf pack? Will you treat every wolf? Will you treat only infected wolves - then how do you confirm a wolf or pack is infected? Oral medications cannot be delivered in a practical or effective manner. And if you possibly treated any wolf, they would get re-infected the next time they ate an infected ungulate.

4. The following point is the most important point. Has any wolf population ever been managed for Echinococcus? And if any has, it would have been ineffective and that would be documented as well.

I recommend dropping the issue of Echinococcus and discuss managing wolf and ungulate populations for the health of the animal populations and the ecosystem; and discuss how to also manage for a healthy approach to supporting the ranching community. (Be pro-active in helping ranchers reduce depredations.)

Echinococcus is endemic to the state of Montana. Therefore it is important for all people who could have exposure through outdoor activity or from their pets to take precautions to minimize exposure to this disease, just as they should take precautions against the other zoonotic diseases in Montana such as plague, tularemia, hantavirus, West Nile Virus, and tick-borne diseases.

Respectfully,

Mark R. Johnson DVM

Wildlife Veterinarian

Project Veterinarian for the 1995-96 Gray Wolf Reintroduction Program

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